

Practical Tips for Family When Considering Discharge Home From Hospital for End of Life Care

Caring for a loved one at end of life will require the support of a full-time family caregiver in addition to available homecare supports. Please speak with your healthcare team to familiarize yourself with your loved one's personal care needs, in order to ensure you are comfortable and able to provide this care.

Equipment Needs:

- Occupational Therapy will assist you in hospital with identifying the most appropriate equipment to meet the needs of your loved one as well as the costs and any coverage associated with this equipment
- If finances are a concern, you can speak with the Social Worker from the hospital or from the home care team
 - If requiring **hospital bed**:
 - You will need twin sheets and blankets
 - You will need access to an electrical outlet to operate the bed
 - You will need to move furniture and remove area rugs to make space for the bed prior to delivery
 - You will need to explore options to provide for privacy when the bed is set up in common areas of the home
 - You may also want to consider an **over bed table** unless you have another surface to house supplies with easy access
 - If requiring a **mechanical lift**, you will need to ensure that it will roll on the surface that the bed is located on (if this is a carpeted surface it may be difficult to navigate the lift and you may need to place a harder surface down
 - Please note that as your loved one becomes weaker it will be easier to care for them in bed rather than getting them up in order to prevent falls
 - Ask your health care providers in the hospital for teaching and tips on repositioning/turning/bathing your loved one in bed
 - If requiring a **commode** consider any uneven floor surfaces that need to be navigated

Oxygen:

- If your loved one requires oxygen and has not previously had this before, the health care team will arrange for an assessment by a Respiratory Therapist before you leave. This assessment will occur shortly before you go home and you will be provided with a list of vendors that can set this equipment up in your home. Costs and coverage can be reviewed based upon this assessment

Wounds/Dressings:

- Ask your health care provider for wound care instructions
- You will need supplies based upon the instructions identified above (please ask for an initial supply to be sent home with you from the hospital if possible)
- Considered focused lighting to assist with care needs

Practical Tips for Family When Considering Discharge Home From Hospital for End of Life Care

Medications:

- Please make sure you have prescriptions before you leave and if there are new medications inquire with the hospital team that these medications are available at the pharmacy that you will be picking them up from (some community pharmacies don't house all medications on their premises and require advanced notice to bring them in)
- Ask your health care team in the hospital about applying for medication coverage through Palliative Blue Cross
- Swallowing pills is easier if taken with pudding/apple sauce/jam etc. instead of liquids
- If injectable medications are being used:
 - you will need to purchase alcohol swabs and syringes from the pharmacy in order to administer these medications (please ask for an initial supply to be sent home with you from the hospital if possible)
 - The nurse in the hospital will provide instructions and teaching on how to draw up and administer these injectable medications before discharge
 - You will need a container for managing sharps (i.e. needles) if you are unable to get this from your pharmacy you could try using an empty coffee can etc.

Transport Home:

- If your loved one is unable to transfer home in your vehicle then you will need to work with your care team in the hospital to make alternate arrangements for transfer by stretcher
 - Non-Emergency Transport: this is arranged by the nursing unit. Costs associated with this are covered by Seniors Blue Cross
 - Genesis Medi-Shuttle: this is arranged by family. For costs associated with this you can contact: 403-201-2053 <https://genesismedishuttle.ca/>

Practical Tips for Family When Considering Discharge Home From Hospital for End of Life Care

Supplies: (these may differ based upon the needs of your loved one)

- Extra face cloths and towels for washing/cleaning
- Basin or large bowl for bed baths
- Baby body wash or other gentle cleansers that don't harm the skin if not completely rinsed
- Tissues, Lotions etc.
- Shirts/nighties: you can cut up the back with scissors up to neck but not through the collar to accommodate care in bed
- Mouth care: soft toothbrushes, club soda, swabs
- Straws, Non-spill cups
- Incontinent supplies including 'attends', wipes
- Garbage receptacle
- Gloves to manage body fluids
- Extra pillows (regular and small-sized) for repositioning
- Multiple soaker pads that can also assist with boosting and repositioning your loved one in bed
- Baby monitor or bell that can be rung so that your loved one can use to alert you of their needs

- Please see ask your health care team for a list of Vendors in the Calgary area where you may be able to find some of the above mentioned supplies and/or equipment
- Vendors may also be found in the following rural areas: High River, Black Diamond, Canmore, Didsbury, Vulcan, Okotoks, Claresholm, Strathmore and Nanton